



# PEQUOT TRAILS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, INC., MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

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Number Three

## A Look at Your Sanctuary

As a member of the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, you belong to one of the most unique community enterprises devoted to the cause of conservation that can be found throughout our country. Too few communities have failed to recognize the need for a comparable program, and fewer still have failed to meet the challenge to do something about it. Our community has met the challenge with a program of positive action. Your support and participation has kept this program a progressive one for the past eleven years. Periodically we must pause for an inventory and a look ahead to the years to come.

Our most valuable asset has been our program. Our physical property serves as a means of promoting this program. Previous figures published herein have revealed the thousands of children and adults that have taken advantage of our facilities and services. In many ways, our record of accomplishment has been a most commendable one. Our most limiting factors have been inadequate financing and sufficient enthusiasm to extend our work to maximum efficiency.

Our responsibilities and the importance of our work will continue to increase in the years ahead. We are all well aware of the necessity for a better understanding, for wiser use, and a more adequate replacement program for our natural resources. This is the challenge that we are trying to meet through a program of education and recreation. The extent to which this program will be successful will be in direct proportion to the desire and applied enthusiasm of our membership. We have the physical features for doing a tremendous job. What we need is more interest, more participation, and a burning desire for success on the part of more people.

As we organize for this year more opportunities will be provided for active participation. Numerous committees are to be set up to extend our work. Your willingness to serve and participate will be most beneficial and greatly appreciated. There will be opportunities for others to help with instructional work, property development, museum exhibits, promotional activities, membership solicitation, and

## Col. Clarke to Open Screen Tours

### Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr. Elected President

#### New Trustees Named

At the summer meeting of the Board of Trustees, Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr., of Ashaway, R. I., was elected President of the Sanctuary for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1957. H. G. Schuster was renamed Vice President, and Louis M. Darmstadt as Treasurer. Philip Cottrell of Stonington was named as Treasurer.

Four new Trustees were added to the Board at the Annual Meeting in July. They were: Mrs. Louis J. Darmstadt, Norwich; Robert Jones, North Stonington; George A. Ford, Noank; and Nelson W. Pickering, Avondale, R. I.

A complete roster of the Sanctuary Board of Trustees follows:

Miss E. Frances Botsford, New London

Mrs. George W. Burgess, Stonington  
Robert E. Burnett, Mystic  
Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr., Ashaway, R.I.  
Philip Cottrell, Stonington  
Mrs. Louis J. Darmstadt, Norwich  
Louis J. Darmstadt, Norwich  
Chon Day, Westerly, R. I.  
George A. Ford, Jr., Noank  
Robert Jones, North Stonington  
Mrs. David L. Kellems, Mystic  
Mrs. Dorothy Lathrop, Quaker Hill  
Mrs. Malcolm MacGregor, Stonington  
William E. Palmer, Stonington  
Nelson W. Pickering, Avondale, R. I.  
Harold G. Schuster, Mystic  
Mrs. F. W. Storrow, Stonington

There are three vacancies on the Board as the result of recent resignations. These will be filled by appointment at the next regular Board meeting.

numerous other activities allied with the promotion of an expanding conservation program.

With confidence in ourselves and an enthusiastic desire for success, your Sanctuary can look forward to an expanding program that will be of increased service to our community and our country.

T. P. McElroy

### Five Programs Scheduled for Season Beginning Nov. 18

Col. Eugene S. Clark, Jr., a native of Cape Cod and a nationally known cetologist and marine scientist, will open the 1956-1957 Screen Tour Series in Palmer Auditorium, Connecticut College, on Sunday afternoon, November 18. He will present "The Living Sea," a lecture about the life of the marine animals in the New England area illustrated with 170 natural color kodachrome slides of living underwater animals, including colorful corals, tunefishes, and many unusual species.

Col. Clark has been doing marine research for more than thirty years. He is the author of many scientific articles on marine life, and since the close of World War II, has been operating a marine research laboratory in Sandwich, Cape Cod, Mass. His current U. S. Army assignment is Chairman, Education and Training Committee, U. S. Army Reserve Training Center, New Bedford, Mass.

#### Dr. Arthur A. Allen—January 27

In keeping with our policy to bring to our community the best naturalists and programs possible, we are happy to be able to include in our series Dr. Arthur A. Allen, Professor Emeritus in Ornithology, Cornell University, one of our country's foremost ornithologists.

**NOTE: Do not order tickets from this announcement. You will receive a special brochure and order form in the mail.**

We remember Dr. Allen for his famous recordings of wild bird songs published by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell. In his lecture and all-color motion picture, Dr. Allen reveals many of the methods used in obtaining his recordings and pictures. He is the author of many books and articles on the lives and habits of birds. He has led numerous scientific expeditions on behalf of the National Geographic Society.

See "Clarke"—Page 3

## There Are No 'Varmints'

by Irston R. Barnes

Reprinted from 'Atlantic Naturalist'

Recently the mail brought a report of a local conservation program that impressed me as being very soundly conceived and competently executed. In a quite extensive area, soil erosion had been checked, cover had been reestablished; trees had been replanted. A wildlife preserve had been created and much of the planting had followed the best precepts of wildlife management and soil conservation.

Then in discussing the problem created by an overabundance of foxes, it was explained that the "varmints" were being trapped and exiled to distant parts. The word varmint may have been only a passing concession to the prejudices of some readers, but it cast doubt on the true orientation of the entire program.

"Varmint" and "vermin" are polar words that have often been the sole moral and biological justification for the misguided slaughter of hawks and owls, crows, cormorants and other fish-eating birds, mountain lions, bears, wolves and coyotes, foxes, raccoons, minks, weasels and snakes. The use of the terms varmint and vermin tells more about the speaker than about the animals designated. It reveals that the speaker is prejudiced, perhaps on the basis of hearsay or perhaps from his own limited experience, against the animal he describes. It tells nothing reliable about the animal or its role in nature.

There is only one safe rule in approaching nature—"whatever is, is right." The appearance of any form of life—other than an introduced exotic—is evidence that there exist those environmental conditions and natural roles for which the animal has been evolved by countless generations of natural selection. No animal lives because it wilfully, perversely and contrary to natural law decides to be alive.

If this basic fact is recognized, the presence of particular animals in such numbers that they become pests may serve as illuminating "indicators." They are evidence that the environment has changed, perhaps through man's activities, in ways to favor an unwanted abundance of particular species. Similarly, the absence of desired wildlife, when individuals of that species are present elsewhere, indicates that the local habitat lacks essential features which that species seeks or that individuals of that species have not had time to establish traditions with respect to the area since it became a suitable habitat.

The term varmint is commonly applied to predators. Yet, except in the rare cases of predators preying on do-

mestic livestock that cannot be protected, predators cannot become too abundant. Predators can never increase beyond the limits set by the available food supply. And since predators take the easiest, most available prey, there is no danger that predation will eliminate or unduly reduce any prey population. Predators, however abundant, always adjust their numbers to the changing numbers of their prey.

To designate any animal "vermin" is to confess that the speaker knows little or nothing about the animal or its role in nature. Every animal has its essential natural tasks; every animal discharges a vital natural function. To ignore this is to invite trouble.

The farmer who has resorted to heavy applications of lethal insecticides has killed myriads of beneficial insects along with grasshoppers that plundered his crops. He has paid a high future price in a less productive soil and a prospect of a more troublesome insect problem in future years. The plague of grasshoppers might have been avoided if he had not, the year before, resorted to the wholesale poisoning of field mice and other small rodents, which probably also reduced the number of birds; both had helped to keep grasshoppers and other insects within bounds. And the rodent campaign would not have been necessary if the farmer had not carried on a relentless shooting war against the hawks, owls, foxes and skunks because he imagined that they were preying heavily on quail. The balance which nature strikes is generally beneficial if man does not blindly tilt the scales, but it can become costly and troublesome when human interference seeks to favor or to prejudice one species without knowledge of the ecological consequences.

Those who aspire to understand natural phenomena will accept every designation of an animal as "vermin" or of a plant as "weed" as a challenge to discover the natural role of the "vermin" or "weed." The inquiry will probably lead to the discovery that fundamentally this is another instance of man working against, rather than with, nature.

## Members Invited to Lecture

The North Stonington Garden Club is sponsoring a lecture at the North Stonington Elementary School on Friday, October 26 at 2:00 p.m. Dr. John Rankin of the Zoology Department at the University of Connecticut will lecture and show his own colored pictures of "Underwater Gardens." Dr. Rankin is an expert in this field and an exceptionally fine photographer. His program should prove most interesting to all. The public is invited and admission is free.

## Brush Control

### Practices Determined

A nation-wide survey is under way to determine actual brush control practices on the rights of way of approximately 1,000 electric utility organizations, according to the Wildlife Management Institute, sponsor of the project. The actual survey is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Frank E. Egler of the Committee for Brush Control Recommendations for Rights of Way, formerly affiliated with the American Museum of Natural History.

The project is concerned with the multiple-use potentialities of the considerable acreage of land that is in rights of way, especially in regions where land is generally at a premium. One of the major uses of this land could be that of providing habitat for various species of wildlife. The project is designed to reveal that form of brush control and management which, in addition to fulfilling the objectives of the utilities, would create the highest conservation values to society and the nation.

A detailed questionnaire is being sent to most of the private power companies, rural electric cooperatives, and public power districts. The questions concern established practices, past brush control treatments, and the utilities' individual evaluations of the existing vegetative conditions on their rights of way.

The information compiled during the study will be analyzed on a state basis and the findings will be made available to the corporations involved as well as the professional conservation and research organizations.

## Trading Post Items

**Wild Bird Feed—Our own special mix .....** 25c  
(Less 10% in 100 lb lots)

**Bird Feeders—All kinds .....** \$1.00 to \$20.00

**Bird Houses .....** \$1.00 to \$6.00

## GIFT ITEMS

<b>Stationery .....</b>	<b>\$1.00 to \$2.50</b>
<b>Note Paper .....</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>
<b>Party Matches .....</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>
<b>Audubon Bird Calls .....</b>	<b>\$1.50</b>
<b>"Handbook of Attracting Birds" .....</b>	<b>\$2.00</b>

## Conservation Measures By 84th Congress

Washington, D. C.—Where it took definite action, the record of the 84th Congress on natural resources conservation was "generally good," according to a summary released by the National Wildlife Federation.

It listed the following major conservation accomplishments of the Congress which adjourned July 27:

1. Soil bank legislation that included forestry and wildlife objectives, and the supplementary Great Plains conservation program.

2. A new water pollution law that has stronger enforcement teeth and provides federal grants to municipalities to help build sewage-treatment plants.

3. Long-needed reform of the outmoded mining laws of 1872 for the purpose of preventing and eliminating fake mining claims on the public lands.

4. Actions to strengthen and improve the National Park System. These included defeat of Echo Park dam, a reclamation project proposed for construction in Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado and Utah, and appropriations to start "Mission 66," a ten-year program of rehabilitation and improvement of the parks and monuments.

5. Elevation of federal fish and wildlife functions by creation of a new Assistant Secretary of Interior and reorganization of the Fish and Wildlife Service into two major bureaus, one for sport fisheries and wildlife, the other for commercial fisheries.

6. Legislation to release \$13,500,000 of federal-aid wildlife funds that had been tied up in the treasury for ten years.

7. Revision of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 to cut red tape, broaden the objectives and accelerate the small watersheds program.

## **Gift to Sanctuary**

The Sanctuary has recently received a large case of mounted birds as a gift of Miss Mary T. Russell of Woodbridge, Conn. The birds were mounted by and given in memory of Edward L. Munson who served as a General in the United States Army Medical Corps. These specimens will be cleaned and added to those given by Clarence Pierce of Lebanon.

Your Sanctuary is endeavoring to secure as complete a collection as possible of mounted birds for use in our educational program. Any members knowing of available collections are asked to notify the Curator.

## Sanctuary Bird Notes

A conflict developed this summer during the nesting season between our colony of martins and a pair of sparrow hawks that took up residence in one of the flicker boxes. The martin colony was pretty well broken up but a number did survive for the trip south. Next season the boxes will be re-served "for flickers only."

\* \* \*

The pond in the meadow attracted numerous herons, egrets, bitterns, and ducks during the summer.

\* \* \*

This was an exceptionally fine season for cuckoos and quail. Both nested in greater abundance about the Sanctuary.

\* \* \*

Two wood duck boxes were used this spring with young being hatched in both.

\* \* \*

Scarlet tanagers were not so common as usual. Perhaps this was due to the heavy spring kill on the highways when they took to the warm highways in search of insects during a period of cold weather.

## Things You May Not Know

The Alaskan brown bear is the size of a rat at birth. Cubs are usually born while the mother is denning up for the winter and when she leaves the den, they weigh 15 to 20 pounds.

\* \* \*

The stomach of the camel contains a honeycomb structure with cells that can be closed by muscular action and in which water can be stored.

\* \* \*

The king cobra is one of the deadliest of the snakes. When threatening to strike, it raises itself about five feet and spreads its hood. Its bite can be fatal in a few hours.

\* \* \*

The Peregrine Falcon is one of the fastest flyers in the bird world. It has been clocked at 175 miles an hour in a dive.

\* \* \*

Reindeer are unlike other members of the deer family in that both sexes possess antlers.

\* \* \*

As many as 15,000 eggs may be laid by the American toad in two spiral tubes of jelly, but less than one tadpole in a hundred will live to become an adult.

\* \* \*

The Mute Swan is not really mute, as it hisses when angry and calls its young with a sound that may be described as a feeble bark. In England, this swan has had the status of a royal bird ever since the year 1482.

## Clarke

(Continued from Page One)

### Other Lectures Scheduled

The series will continue on Sunday afternoon, February 3, when Professor K. T. Rogers of Oberlin College presents "Call of the Mountains." In a beautiful color film we see the story of a naturalist's trek thru the Sierras and Canadian Rockies. Incomparable mountain scenery sets the stage for the big Sequoias, the Sierra sooty grouse, deer, grizzly bear, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain goat, moose, caribou, elk, and numerous other species. Portraits of tiny mountain flowers wet with dew, or rustling in the wind, add their charm.

This program was honored as the selected feature presentation at the banquet of the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Boston.

The fourth lecture in the series will be presented by Edward M. Brigham, Jr., Director of the Kingman Museum of Natural History in Battle Creek, Michigan. Mr. Brigham will present "Down Mexico Way," a colorful motion picture story of the people and the fascinating wildlife of our southern neighbors. His program will be presented on March 3. Two weeks later, March 17, the series will close with Dr. Arthur C. Twomey, Curator of Ornithology of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, presenting "North to the Polar Sea."

### Series Sponsored Jointly

Again this year the Nature Screen Tour Programs are being sponsored jointly by the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary and the Connecticut Arboretum. This year for the first time all programs are being presented on Sunday afternoons at three o'clock. Members are asked not to order tickets from this announcement. All members will receive a special brochure and ticket order form in the mail in the near future.

## Lectures Given by Curator

The Curator's lecture program is again in full swing with the closing of the summer season and the opening of school. One program has been presented in the Norwich schools and two more in the Groton public schools. More programs are scheduled for later in the fall and winter.

Schools and organizations desiring programs on birds, nature, conservation, and allied subjects should write Mr. McElroy in care of the Sanctuary or call Mystic, JEFFerson 6-9248 for information. These lectures are given free when they come under the scope of the Sanctuary's educational program. Other lectures can be arranged on a set fee basis.

## Book Reviews

### The Singing Wilderness by Sigurd F. Olson

245 pages. Illustrated with many thumbnail sketches by Francis Lee Jaques. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York; 1956. Price \$4.00.

**The Singing Wilderness** is a chronicle of a wilderness year; a recording of the animals, plants, geology, and the moods and muses of spring, summer, autumn, and winter seasons in the beautiful and pristine wilderness of the Quetico-Superior Country straddling the international boundary between Minnesota and Ontario.

The book contains 33 concisely written and gripping essays based on the author's experiences, observations, and reflections in the wilderness country. Probably no other man is better equipped to write on this area than is Olson, who for the past 30 or more years has canoed and camped extensively throughout the Quetico-Superior wilderness and knows it with an intimacy that few will ever achieve.

\* \* \*

### An Introduction to Ornithology

by George J. Wallace

443 pages. Illustrated with many black and white photographs, sketches, and maps. Published by the Macmillan Company, 60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York; 1955. Price \$8.00.

"This book," the author writes, "was prepared to meet the critical need for an introductory text in ornithology. There are many authoritative and comprehensive works that cover various aspects of ornithology, but at the present writing there is none that deals impartially with the whole field, and the many popular books that approach this goal are not particularly designed for student use."

The text is organized in 12 main chapters roughly designed to fit a 12-weeks' school term, with four supplementary chapters for schools offering a more comprehensive course on a semester or a 16-weeks' basis. In general, the text is elementary in presentation and is keyed for those schools that offer bird courses to students having little prerequisite biological training.

Become a Screen Tour Patron now! See your special Screen Tour letter for details.

### The Natural History of North American Amphibians and Reptiles by J. A. Oliver

359 pages. Illustrated with black and white photographs, sketches, and diagrams. Published by the D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 120 Alexander Street, Princeton, New Jersey; 1955. Price \$6.95.

According to the author, who is the curator of reptiles of the New York Zoological Society, this book is intended for the naturalist and the beginning student of amphibians and reptiles.

As such, it is a satisfying book, easily read and with many illustrations and sketches to give emphasis to the animals and the points being discussed. The use of technical terminology has been avoided wherever more readily understood wording could be substituted without a loss of accuracy. Common names, supported by the scientific names in parentheses, are used for all the many snakes, turtles, and amphibians included in the book.

### Conservation Discussion

**Concepts of Conservation**, a new publication prepared by The Conservation Foundation, is intended for discussion groups interested in the natural resources of the nation.

The text of the 48-page booklet highlights the meaning and significance of resources and conservation, and comments specifically on the problems and aspects of soil, water, forest, and wildlife management. Discussion topics and a reading list are presented with each section and in addition there is appended a general reading list, a listing of 16 mm. educational filmstrips and other films. Copies are available at 25 cents each from the Foundation, Box 1812, Grand Central Station, New York, New York, with bulk orders of 50 copies supplied at \$10.00.

Hunting and fishing appeal to all age groups from 12 years to 65-plus but seems slightly more popular in the age groups, 12-17 and 35-44.

Of the 118,366,000 individuals aged 12 and over in the United States the survey found that 24,917,000 hunted or fished or did both.

Five million women fished and nearly half a million hunted.

There were 13,133,000 who fished only; 4,104,000 who hunted only, and 7,680,000 who did both.

### Forest Nurseries Expanding For Soil Bank

Forest tree seedlings to meet stepped-up requirements of landowners who intend to plant trees as conservation projects in The Soil Bank Conservation Reserve will result from steps now being taken by State and Federal forestry services, the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced today. These plans include expanding present State tree nurseries and establishing new ones in order to assure that sufficient stocks of forest seedlings will be available, according to Richard E. McArdle, chief of the Department's Forest Service. Plans include using tree seedlings produced by commercial nurseries.

Participants in the Soil Bank Conservation Reserve may also get advice and guidance on planting trees so their plantations will get off to a good start. These technical helps will be furnished by extending existing State-Federal cooperative assistance programs. At present the Federal government assists the States in financing tree nurseries which provide seedlings to private landowners at low cost and in financing the services of foresters who furnish on-the-ground help to timber land owners regarding the management of their lands. Both parts of the program are administered by the States. Under the Soil Bank Program, provision is made for technical help in tree planting to be furnished through local State forestry offices. General information on tree planting under the Soil Bank program may be obtained through County Agents or local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees.

Foresters expect requests for an additional billion seedlings annually above present demands from landowners who participate in the tree planting programs of the Agriculture Act of 1956. While nursery stocks now available will go part way toward meeting immediate needs, State Foresters and the U. S. Forest Service expect it will take at least two years to satisfy the increased demand of the Soil Bank tree planting program. The Conservation Reserve part of the Soil Bank program provides inducements for the reduction of crop producing acreage through retirement of designated crop land to conservation uses. Among the conservation practices approved are the establishment of a vegetative cover such as grass or trees on the retired land.

The act also authorized added assistance to State forestry agencies to carry out expanded State-Federal cooperative reforestation programs. This reforestation program recognizes the need to speed up tree planting on millions of acres of forest land non-stocked or poorly stocked.